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NEWTON ABBOT RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH for 1940.

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VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1940

LIVE BIRTHS	M.	F.	TOTAL	
Legitimate	117	121)		
Illegitimate	8	5)	251	= Rate of 10.6. per 1000

Average rate for last 10 years = 14.2 per 1000
England and Wales Birth Rate (1940) = 14.6

STILL BIRTHS				
Legitimate	6	4)		
Illegitimate	-	-)	10	= Rate of 38.3. per 1000 births (live & still)

DEATHS	161	161	322	= Rate of 13.6 per 1000 (crude)

Corrected Death Rate = 11.1
England & Wales Death Rate (1940) = 14.3

MATERNAL MORTALITY (Child birth)
1 = Rate of 3.6 per 1000 births (live & still)

INFANTILE MORTALITY 17 (legitimate)
= Rate of 62 per 1000 live births.

England & Wales Rate = 55

ANNUAL REPORT.

This Report - the second of the War period - is drawn up in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular 2314 dated 26th March, 1941, which directs that it should be of the same kind as the Report for 1939 and be confined to essential matters affecting public health especially those arising from or connected with the War.

In this respect it may be said at once that it would be difficult to mention anything affecting the Public Health of the Urban and Rural Districts of Newton Abbot that was not caused by the War and that the chief cause of disturbance from the normal was undoubtedly the presence of the evacuated population of women and children from London. They in fact from a Public Health point of view colour the whole picture.

THE EVACUEES.

As mentioned in the Report for 1939 about 400 unaccompanied children arrived in September of that year but by Christmas about half had returned home and it was not till the following June (1940) that two lots of about 600 each arrived in quick succession and were distributed throughout the District. From then on and increasingly as London became more dangerous there was a steady and almost daily influx of women and children some official and some private but all demanding billets. Mothers with four or five children presented the greatest difficulty but by requisitioning empty houses and reconditioning and furnishing houses made vacant by the Housing Acts in one way or another all were accommodated. The number of such houses made available in this way was 15 giving accommodation for 128 women and children. By the end of the year there were in the District about 2,600 children of school age and under and about 1,000 mothers helpers and other evacuated persons.

HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION.

As it was anticipated that a certain number of the children would for various reasons be unsuitable for billeting in private houses it was decided to put them altogether in one large house and Tapley House, Bishopsteignton was requisitioned for the purpose. This gave accommodation for 30 to 40 children of both sexes with a Matron and Staff in charge.

Everything went well until Scabies and other contagious skin diseases began to break out in the District necessitating removal to the Hostel and it was then found that the accommodation was neither suitable nor sufficient.

It happened that the same thing was occurring in the Urban District which has two Hostels, one for boys and one for girls, in neither of which was there suitable isolation accommodation.

By agreement between the two Councils it was decided that all the unbilletable girls of the two Districts should go to Tapley House, all the boys to Milton House, Newton Abbot, while 'Loraine' the other Newton Hostel should be used as a Sick Bay for both Districts.

The change over was effected on January 18th of this year since when everything has worked smoothly. The number of inmates of the three houses varies but the average is about 80.

There is very little sickness among them and they have the appearance of good health and happiness.

MATERNITY & CHILD WELFARE.

Arrangements have been made by the County Council for the reception of expectant evacuee mothers into a number of Nursing Homes in conveniently situated localities; in this District notably at Teignmouth, Torquay and Totnes.

WELFARE CENTRES

Those at Moretonhampstead, Ipplepen and Kingskerswell carried on as before, and owing to the popularity of such institutions with the Londoners their activities were considerably increased.

Bovey Tracey was unfortunate in losing its Centre and for four months was without one. It was not till 1st.November that one was found at the Baptist Chapel which though cramped and crowded is better than none at all. Here again the evacuees are much in evidence their number on the books (21) being actually higher than that of the Devon mothers (19).

INFECTIOUS & NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.

Notifiable diseases totalled 302 cases, an unprecedented number and mainly accounted for by the inclusion of Measles & Whooping Cough. At the same time the high figure for Diptheria (average annual number for the last 10 years = 10) can only be due to the excess in child population and war time conditions of living, especially during the Winter months.

Evacuees were concerned in 12 of the cases of Diphtheria, 10 of the cases of Scarlet Fever and 3 of the Paratyphoid cases.

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INFECTIOUS DISEASE (C ntd)

DISEASE	CASES	SENT TO HOS-PITAL	DEATHS
Scarlet Fever	29	22	0
Diphtheria	45	42	3
Pneumonia	12	4	0
Erysipelas	11	2	0
Typhoid	1	0	0
Cerebro Spinal Fever	2	2	0
Paratyphoid B.	5	3	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	1	0
Whooping Cough	14	0	0
Measles.	182	0	0

As regards other Public Health work there is little to record. Chlorinating apparatus has been installed for the water supplies to Chudleigh and Kingsteignton but apart from this no new work has been possible other than that required by the Military and it has been chiefly a matter of the upkeep and maintenance of the essential services.

Council Offices.
Kingsteignton Road
NEWTON ABBOT.

W.H.SCOTT.
Medical Officer of Health

July, 1941.